235416 - Specious arguments of the Ash‘aris about Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Abi’l-‘Izz (may Allah have mercy on them)

the question

An Ash‘ari Shaykh (may Allaah guide him) has caused many doubts in the hearts of the Salafi youth. Among many of them is: Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned a fabricated Hadeeth to prove his ‘Aqeedah in Ijtimaa’ al-Juyoosh, where he mentioned the Hadeeth: “...For indeed, the first one to pray (Janaazah) over me will be the Lord from above His Throne.” And after this paragraph, he mentioned a Hadeeth from Musnad Ahmad in which he - as the Ash‘ari Shaykh says - forged the word ‘Jaalisan’ (sitting). He also says the Sharh of Ibn Abi’l ‘Izz of al-Tahhaawiyyah is baatil, and only the Salafiyyoon rely on it. What is your response to such accusations?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The attribution of exaltedness to Allah, may He be exalted, which means that He is high above His creation and that He rose (istiwa’) over the Throne, is proven definitively in the Holy Qur’an and the mutawaatir Prophetic Sunnah, and according to the consensus of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them), and is also proven on the basis of rational thinking.

We have previously explained that in a number of fatwas. See fatwas no. 992, 131956, 195996.

Even though the evidence for that is as clear as the light of day, some people are blind to this evidence or turn a blind eye to it, or they go to great lengths to distort it and divert it from what it clearly means. Sheer stubbornness or ignorance may make a person reach wrong conclusions or

come up with the wrong argument when trying to refute those who differ from him. Hence you see him trying to refute the truth with that which no sensible man would use, and going to great lengths to produce an argument that is contrary to both Islamic teachings and reason.

An example of that is what the questioner mentioned about that Ash‘ari shaykh.

The response to that is as follows:

-1-

Assume that Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) made a mistake. Everyone sometimes gets things right and sometimes gets things wrong. Any person’s view may be accepted or rejected, except that of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), as was stated by Imam Maalik (may Allah have mercy on him).

If Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) – or anyone else – makes a mistake, does it make sense to any rational person to say that this should be a reason to reject the truth and not accept it?

-2-

Anyone who reads the biography of Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) and the scholars’ praise for him will find out about the vastness of his knowledge and the strength of his religious commitment, piety and fear of Allah, may He be exalted, which prevented him from deliberately attributing to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) something that he did not say. What is required of the Muslim is to think well of his fellow Muslim from whom he has never seen anything bad, so how about if that Muslim is a respectable Muslim scholar who was praised by so many of his fellow scholars and from whose knowledge so many scholars have benefitted?

Undoubtedly he is more deserving of being well thought of.

The hadith mentioned by the questioner ("the first one to pray (janaazah) over me will be the Lord from above His Throne") is a false and fabricated hadith. It was quoted by al-Haythami (may Allah have mercy on him) in Majma' az-Zawaa'id (9/31), then he said: It was narrated by at-Tabaraani, but its isnaad includes 'Abd al-Mun'im ibn Idrees, who is a liar and a fabricator. End quote.

See the answer to question no. 100100.

Perhaps when Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted this hadith, he did not realise that it was a fabricated hadith, and this is what appears to be the case, because he did not mention its isnaad or state who narrated it of the leading scholars of hadith, which indicates that he wrote it down from memory and did not check it in other sources. A person's memory may not always be in the best shape, because forgetfulness is a problem that hardly any human being is free of. Therefore one of the attributes of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, that is indicative of His perfect nature and might, is that He does not forget: "My Lord is neither unaware nor does He forget" [Taa-Haa 20:52].

With regard to the addition of the word jaalisan (sitting) in the second hadith, then yes, it was found to have been added in his book, and it is not part of the hadith. It may be that Ibn al-Qayyim added it because he forgot the exact wording of the hadith, or it was a mistake made when writing, or it may be that it was added by one of the copyists.

Al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ibn al-Qayyim narrated in his book Ijtimaa' al-Juyoosh al-Islamiyyah (p. 34) a hadith of Ibn 'Abbaas that was narrated from Ahmad with the words: "sitting on His Kursiy or His Throne." So he added the word "sitting", but this additional word does not appear with Ahmad or anyone else whom we have mentioned. Therefore I think it was added by mistake, for I do not know of any proven hadith

that mentions the Lord, may He be exalted, sitting.

End quote from Mukhtasar al-‘Uluw (p. 93).

With regard to these phrases that speak of the Lord sitting on His Kursiy or on His Throne, and so on, even though no saheeh hadith that is attributed to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) ever mentioned that, they were narrated from more than one of the early generations and the imams (leading scholars), but they did not mean anything more than the meaning of the Lord, may He be exalted, rising over His Throne (istiwa’). However it is preferable to keep to the wording of istiwa’ (rising over – rather than using the word sitting).

Shaykh al-Barraak (may Allah preserve him) said:

In some reports the action of sitting is attributed to Allah, may He be exalted, and it is said that He sits on His Kursiy however He, may He be glorified, wills. Perhaps some of the imams (leading scholars) coined this word. The context of what was said by the Shaykh [i.e., Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah] indicates that what is meant by istiwa’ (rising over) is sitting, but it is more appropriate not to use this wording, unless it is proven.

End quote from Sharh ar-Risaalah at-Tadmuriyyah (p. 188).

See also the answer to question no. 219403

However, Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned in his book Ijtimaa‘ al-Juyoosh al-Islamiyyah fifty hadiths all of which indicate that Allah, may He be exalted, is exalted and is above His creation, and most of these hadiths are saheeh; approximately fifteen of them are to be found in as-Saheehayn or in one of them.

Before that, he mentioned some of the evidence of the Holy Qur’an that speaks of Allah, may He be exalted, being above His creation. Allah mentions His rising over His Throne (istiwa’) in seven

places in the Qur'an, as is well known.

Then Ibn al-Qayyim followed that with the views of the Sahaabah, Taabi'een and imams concerning this matter.

So is it rational or fair to reject all the evidence of the Holy Qur'an and mutawaatir hadiths just because Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) made mistakes in one or two places, or he mentioned a hadith that was not saheeh? No one would justify that at all, except one who is ignorant or stubborn.

Long ago it was said that the fortunate one is the one whose mistakes are countable (as opposed to being innumerable).

So bring whatever evidence you like from the books of the Ash'aris or anyone else, and see what their attitude is towards the Sunnah of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and the reports of the early generations, and how they reject saheeh hadiths and even, sometimes, mutawaatir hadiths, that differ with their point of view.

How can they quote hadiths to support their view, but when they want to quote reports to support their view, they quote that which is not soundly narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) or even that which has no basis?

Secondly:

The commentator on al-'Aqeedah at-Tahhaawiyyah is Imam Sadr ad-Deen Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Abi'l-'Izz al-Hanafi al-Adhra'i as-Saalihi ad-Dimashqi, one of the shaykhs and imams (leading scholars) of Ahl as-Sunnah. He based his commentary on the books of Ahl as-Sunnah and defended the 'aqeedah (belief) of the salaf. He was persecuted for that, but he bore it with patience and sought reward with Allah. Please see the answer to question no. 93197.

Whoever impugns him or his ‘aqeedah has committed slander and taken upon himself a burden of plain sin. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, bear on themselves the crime of slander and plain sin”

[al-Ahzaab 33:58].

There is no one who does not make mistakes or commit errors. Whoever tries to seek out the mistakes of the scholars in order to criticise them has wronged himself and has transgressed the limits set by Allah.

This book, Sharh al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahhaawiyyah, is available in print, so any argument against it should be made in an academic manner, far removed from partisanship, whims and desires, slander, and accusing the author of something of which he is innocent.

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If a person says something of a believer that is not true, Allah will cause him to dwell in the mud of khabaal [a lot of mud and dirt. It is explained in a hadith as being the juice of the people of Hell] until he retracts what he said.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood (3597); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

Moreover, this book is a commentary on a text of ‘aqeedah that was written by Imam at-Tahhaawi al-Hanafi. It is well known as al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahhaawiyyah and it is, for the most part, in accordance with the ‘aqeedah of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah, and is different from the way of the Ash‘aris and others who differed from the way of the salaf.

For more information on the text of al-‘Aqeedah at-Tahhaawiyyah, please see the answer to question no. 93197.

We ask Allah, may He be exalted, to show us the truth as true and enable us to follow it, and to show us falsehood as false and enable us to avoid it, and not to make it ambiguous or unclear to us, thus causing us to go astray.

And Allah knows best.